

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5031

AS PASSED SENATE, JANUARY 29, 1992

Brief Description: Creating a crime stoppers assistance office.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Nelson, Madsen, Thorsness, Talmadge, Rasmussen, Oke, Gaspard, A. Smith, Snyder, Wojahn and Johnson; by request of Attorney General).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5031 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Nelson, Chairman; Thorsness, Vice Chairman; Erwin, Hayner, Kreidler, L., Madsen, Newhouse, Rasmussen, and Smith, A.

Staff: Jon Carlson (786-7459)

Hearing Dates: January 23, 1991

BACKGROUND:

"Crime Stoppers" is a program which allies the news media, the community, and law enforcement in the fight against serious crime. Without reliable information from witnesses about the identity of criminals, the chance of solving any particular crime is drastically reduced. Realizing that some individuals are unwilling to volunteer information either because of apathy or fear of criminal retaliation, Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards and anonymity to persons who provide details leading to the arrest or charging of suspected criminals.

Crime Stoppers has been successfully employed in major areas of Washington, as well as elsewhere in the United States. With state assistance, other regions or jurisdictions can begin similar successful programs.

During the 1990 session, the Legislature appropriated \$200,000 in the supplemental budget to the office of the Attorney General for grants to local governments for the operating expenses of Crime Stoppers programs.

SUMMARY:

The Attorney General is required to establish a Crime Stoppers Assistance Office. This office must work in conjunction with local Crime Stoppers' organizations, sheriffs, and police chiefs to design local Crime Stoppers programs and provide them with training and assistance.

The Crime Stoppers Assistance Office may distribute funds in the form of grants to law enforcement agencies or local jurisdictions with qualified Crime Stoppers programs. Matching resources may be required from Crime Stopper programs seeking grants. At least 25 percent of the grants must be for training, public awareness efforts, and establishing new programs. Grants awarded to local jurisdictions may only be used for operating costs and may not be used for awards.

An advisory council is appointed by the Attorney General to periodically review the Crime Stoppers program and report to the Legislature not later than January 1 of each year.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Crime Stoppers is a proven, cost-effective program for solving crimes through the cooperative efforts of law enforcement, private citizens, and the media.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Ken Eikenberry, Washington State Attorney General; Mike Grant, Assistant Attorney General; Stan Finkelstein, Association of Washington Cities; Detective James Hall, Yakima Sheriff's Office; Detective Myrle Carner, Seattle-King County Crime Stoppers Program